



Neighbors Building Neighborhoods Block-by-Block Pride Grants

Program Description

Neighbors Building Neighborhood's Block-by-Block Pride Grants is a neighborhood-oriented, small matching grants program that enables residents to work together to design, develop and implement their own neighborhood improvement ideas and projects.

The maximum amount of each grant will be \$2,500. Project participation will provide the opportunity for neighbors to work together and develop and enhance relationships with one another to accomplish common neighborhood goals.

Participating residents will design and implement neighborhood enrichment activities such as: landscaping and beautification projects, environmental enhancements, and neighborhood pride activities and celebrations. Fifteen (15) projects will be awarded City-wide through a competitive application process.

Residents' Role:

- Resident leaders and civic leaders help promote the program and help to distribute information packets in their communities.
- Attend application workshops.
- Submit proposals for projects.
- Work together as good neighbors to implement projects.
- Showcase projects at the Annual Front Porch Neighborhood Summit.

Staff Role:

- Advertise and promote programs.
- Support and facilitate program needs.
- Provide technical assistance as necessary.
- Schedule and facilitate application workshops.
- Distribute and collect applications, maintain application database, ensure eligibility, and disburse funds.

The Application Process

Who Can Apply?

Proposed projects must be implemented in the neighborhood of residency. All applications must be endorsed by the civic league representing the neighborhood. A group qualifying as a civic league must have:

- Open membership to all residents of the neighborhood;
- Officers (president, secretary, treasurer);
- Bylaws (a copy must be provided);
- Regular meetings and meeting minutes.

Examples of Eligible Project Types:

- Landscaping/Beautification Projects – Must be completed on publicly owned land or privately owned property. If on private land, the project must be located in a highly visible area and must provide a permanent improvement to the area (ex. community garden, neighborhood gateway treatment, etc.).
- Block Festival Projects – Must be an extension of community pride festivals or celebrations; related to recognition activities to highlight community involvement, good citizenship or community awareness.
- Home Enhancement Projects – Must address exterior house conditions, where the owners are unable to improve the property themselves (disadvantaged seniors and/or persons with disabilities) and recognized by the civic league as needing benevolent support.
- Environmental Enhancement Projects – Must coordinate approvals with appropriate City departments (Recreation, Parks and Open Space – Parks & Forestry and/or Planning – Environmental Services). Project examples include wetland restoration, rain gardens, shoreline buffer restoration (native tree/shrub planting), invasive plant species control and habitat restoration.
- Public Art – Must be planned, designed and constructed by neighborhood residents.

Existing projects will not be considered.

If a project is undertaken on a public property or right-of-way, future maintenance will be the responsibility of the applicant.

Matching Requirements:

- All Block-by-Block Pride Project funding must be matched by the applicant. The maximum grant amount is \$2,500.
- Eligible match can be cash or quantifiable in-kind contributions.
- To ensure completion of projects, the City will retain 10% from the final invoice until completion has been verified by the appropriate City staff.

Project Guidelines:

- The project must have support of the neighborhood civic league or association.
- The project must involve residents in all phases of implementation including volunteer labor or “sweat equity.” All work should be completed by residents.

- Replacement or maintenance-related projects, such as replacement of mail boxes, entrance signs or plant removal are not eligible.
- The project must meet all City codes and conform to all departmental policies.
- The project must obtain all City permits required for construction.
- Future maintenance will be the responsibility of the applicant or a designee.

Proposal Guidelines:

- Clearly explain the intended project.
- Outline the neighborhood issue(s) the project will address.
- Explain the anticipated benefits of the project to the neighborhood and residents.
- Describe the extent of resident participation in the project's implementation.
- Provide an estimate of all costs associated with completing the project. Identify sources of match.
- Demonstrate that the applicant has received civic league endorsement. A civic league may endorse multiple projects; however, only one will be funded.

The Selection Process

Application Review and Selection:

- All applications will be reviewed for eligibility. Incomplete or ineligible applications will be returned with a letter of denial.
- The Program Review and Selection Committee will decide which projects will be funded and is comprised of representatives from:
 - 1) Planning
 - 2) Recreation, Parks and Open Space (Parks & Forestry)
 - 3) Planning (Environmental Services)
 - 4) City Manager's Office
 - 5) Public Works
 - 6) Cultural Facilities, Arts, and Affairs (Special Events)
- Successful applicants will be notified by letter of their award.
- Applicants will be requested to sign an agreement stating the responsibilities and expectations of each party.
- There will be a meeting to explain each section of the agreement, how to draw funds, timeframes for receiving payments, and the deadline for completing the entire project.

Selection Criteria:

Each application will be scored by a standardized set of criteria:

- Level of resident involvement and project participation;
- Benefit and impact to the community as a whole;
- The extent to which objectives are feasible and the project is realistic and well-planned.

For unfunded projects, advice will be provided on how to craft a successful proposal in the future.

Things to Remember:

- Be sure to demonstrate neighborhood involvement
- Check with Public Works Department if your project is in a public right-of-way.
- Check with the Planning Department to make sure your project is in compliance with City codes or if it needs a variance.
- Before you dig, check with Miss Utility (dial 811 or 1-800-552-7001).

The Grant Administration Process

Payment Requirements and Process:

- After the execution of the agreement, grant recipients may begin the implementation of their projects and draw funds in accordance with program guidelines.
- There are two acceptable methods of drawing grant funds: reimbursement or invoice.

1. Reimbursement Method

- The recipient will purchase the goods needed using their own cash funds.
- The recipient will then complete and submit a payment request form with paid-in-full receipt(s) attached.
- The recipient will be reimbursed for up to 50% of the amount of the cash payment.

2. Invoice Method

- The recipient will select the materials needed for the project.
- The recipient will complete and submit a budget summary form specifying the full cost of the activity and identify all payment sources. This will include the source and value of any quantifiable in-kind contributions.
- The recipient will obtain and provide copies of itemized invoices from all vendor(s) and any quantifiable in-kind contributions used as part of the match.
- After demonstrating payment or other fulfillment of the recipient's match obligations, the City will pay the remaining balance of the invoice directly to the vendor.

3. Ineligible Purchases:

- Employment Wages
- Alcohol
- Perishable goods and products (ex. food)
- Banners, equipment, furnishings, or any items that could be easily removed and placed elsewhere

The Close-Out Process

- Reminders will be forwarded well in advance to recipients who have not started or completed their projects to encourage them to complete projects by the deadline.
- The City will complete a close-out report on each grant, verifying that the project was completed and funds were spent in accordance with the agreement.

Awards and Celebrations:

- There will be a public announcement to recognize the recipients.
- At the Annual Front Porch Neighborhood Summit, all participating neighborhoods will be expected to showcase their projects. The Annual Front Porch Summit will be a forum sponsored by the City and focused on celebrating Norfolk's neighborhoods and its great neighbors.

Annual Program Timeline

January 2012	Program is formally announced; distribution of promotional materials and application packets to neighborhood associations. Residents and civic leagues begin thinking about and developing ideas for potential projects.
February 2012	The City conducts application workshop; the Application Review and Selection Committee members are confirmed.
March 15, 2012	Applications are due.
March 2012	City staff review applications for eligibility. Notify grant recipients of their award; notify unsuccessful applicants of denial.
April 2012	Execution of the agreement Implementation of projects (by recipients) begins.
September 2012	Completion all projects and file close-out documents.